The Golden Age

James ROBINSON Paul SMITH

Richard ORY

BOOK THREE OF FOUR

"We
had
prosperity."

1949...

...BEGAN LIKE ALL YEARS, WITH THE AFTERTASTE OF THE YEAR PRIOR STILL IN PEOPLE'S MOUTHS... ON PEOPLE'S MINDS.

IT BEGAN WITH SENATOR TEX THOMPSON'S VISION OF A POLITICALLY CORRECT SUPER-HERO SPREAD NATIONWIDE, HEARD OF IN COUNTLESS SPEECHES...

...AND SEEN ON COUNTLESS BILLBOARDS.

1949...

... AND THE DECADE DWINDLED.

YES, I DID HEAR SOMETHING ABOUT A LOCAL TELEVISION STATION STARTING UP IN THE AREA. YOU'RE ITS PRESIDENT?

WELL, ER... WHY HAVE YOU CALLED *ME*?

THAT'S RIGHT, I DO HAVE MEDIA EXPERIENCE... I'M FLATTERED *SOMEBODY* REMEMBERS THA--

MY OWN SHOW... TALK AND CURRENT AFFAIRS... ON TELEVISION. O... OF COURSE, I... I'D LOVE IT.

AN END TO THE BOREDOM, LIBBY THINKS. AND WON'T JON BE PLEASED.

I'm not an addict. I'm not an addict. I'm not an addict.

...this film's easier.. I'm not as close to the subject.

--OU'RE PULLING YOUR SPONSORSHIP? THAT'S FINE, I'VE GOT THREE MORE LIKE YOU LINED UP... YOU'RE NOT HURTING ME...

SHE'S A PETTY CROOK. LOOSE, TOO, I BET. NOT WORTH OUR TIME.

IT'S *MY* TIME AND *MY* LIFE, SO WHY DON'T YOU FU--

H-HELLO, PAULA, IT'S LANCE... LANCE GALLANT...

LANCE, HOW *ARE* YOU?... I'D LOVE TO, BUT I *CAN'T*... I'M GOING TO ITALY FOR A FEW MONTHS.

I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I GET BACK.

ARE YOU ALMOST READY, JOAN? WE DON'T WANT TO BE LATE TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

A MINUTE, TEX.

AT THE MOMENT... JON ISN'T PLEASED. WITH HIS LIFE... OR THE WORDS ON THE PAGE.

IN MY HEAD THERE'S BRILLIANCE.

had been Lulabelle's so
llumination as she app
er makeup. Because of
t came to her immediat
ttention and turning w
eager eyes, she ran to
loor. Such was her hast
hat the lipstick she'd
ought yesterday aftern
as left to roll off th
f her dresser, falling
he floor and breaking
ine new redness on the
ilth of the carpet. T
ulabelle hadn't notice
or would she have care
he had.
The door to her tr
as thrown open by her,
force that only passi
nd longing can bring.
figure, this hulking ma

ON THE PAGE IT TURNS TO CRAP.

ALAN SCOTT HOPES HIS LIES SOUND CONVINCING.

CANCELLED ACCOUNTS

THERE HAS TO BE MORE THAN THIS.

THIS IS THE LIFE!

SWEET...

...THE FEELING.

SWEET...THE MEMORIES.

SWEET DREAMS, PAUL.

...POWERS OF DANIEL DUNBAR...

...WHICH CONTINUE TO DAZZLE THE PUBLIC IN THE EXHIBITIONS OF HIS STRENGTH AND POWER THAT HAVE BEEN HELD ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

THOUGH ALMOST AS EXTRAORDINARY ARE THE YOUNG MAN'S SKILLS AS AN ORATOR.

MAKE A PROMISE, KEEP A PROMISE. THAT'S AN ADAGE YOU COULD ALL DO WELL TO LIVE BY.

I CERTAINLY DO. I PROMISED AMERICA I WOULD PROTECT ITS SHORES... WITH MY LAST OUNCE OF STRENGTH... MY LAST DROP OF BLO--

EW YORK DAILY

DUNBAR'S VOW

America's new young champion again voiced his fears concerning what he calls "the ever-looming Soviet menace."

At a display of his superhuman abilities, Du swore that these tremend powers would be used t combat any foreign thre might be arising. He w to make the not-so-vei threat to the Soviets th his opinion "attack w means of defe

AND AS YOU CAN SEE, THE GALA BALL WAS WELL ATTENDED.

WHY, THERE'S DANIEL DUNBAR TAKING A MOMENT TO BE INTRODUCED TO RISING MOVIE STARLET DORIS DAY.

THE DECADE'S ALMOST OVER...TIME FLIES FASTER THAN I DO.

BEFORE WE KNOW IT... 1952 AND ANOTHER ELECTION. THEN, I'M SURE, YOU'LL SEE THAT SENATOR THOMPSON IS THE RIGHT --THE ONLY-- CHOICE.

IT BEGAN LIKE ANY OTHER YEAR...DID 1949.

FEBRUARY
S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 11

MARCH
S M T W T F S

POPULAR
ECHANI

Ladies Home
JOURNAL
THE FUTURE MRS. AMERICA
LEFTOVER AFTER

LIFE

OST

PARK

THE DEVICE IS READY FOR TESTING.. AND ITS INVENTOR WHISPERS A PRAYER OF HOPE...

...THOUGH NOT TO ANY GOD.

BUT RATHER TO THOSE HE WORSHIPS.

STARS... I HAVE LOVED YOU FOR SO LONG.

AND YOU IN TURN HAVE GIVEN ME *SUCH* POWER.

I'VE IMPROVED ON IT ...*OUR* GRAVITY ROD. COULDN'T HELP MYSELF... COULDN'T, CAN'T STOP IDEAS... THEY'RE LIKE THE WIND.. THE TIDE.

YET... NOW THAT THE DEVICE IS READY, I'M AFRAID... TO FAIL... TO SUCCEED... TO... TO...

DAMN.

THANK YOU, MY FRIENDS... AS *EVER* YOU AID ME.

BUT THE GUILT... I'M *STILL* HAUNTED BY IT, THE ATOMIC HORROR WE *HELPED* CREATE.

NOW, WITH MY WORK COMPLETED, I SHOULD TAKE MY LIFE. END THE GUILT...END ON A HIGH.

ALL I HAVE TO DO... IS LET GO OF THE ROD.

SO EASY.

SO.

damn me.

the dream varies.

the dream remains the same.

PAUL.

PAUL!

...PAUL... WAKE UP! YOU'RE HAVING A NIGHTMARE.

YE...YEAH... THANKS, BOB.

running.

...if you could only stop running in your dreams... turn and fight...

maybe...

...you could do the same in reality.

AND SO, WITH NEITHER PARTY CONTESTING ANY OF ITS TERMS OR CONDITIONS...

...I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO MAKE THIS DIVORCE FINAL.

We married in such a rush.

Me... I was a rush. Johnny Quick, doing things so fast..

So fast...that at our wedding on that day back then...

LIBBY...

...I forgot to kiss you.

...HAVE A WONDERFUL LIFE.

SPRING... THE TIME OF BIRTH AND RENEWAL. FRESH THOUGHTS AND FRESH WAYS.

FOR MANY, THIS... IS THE BEST TIME OF ANY YEAR.

BUT NOT FOR ALL

THE REQUEST COMING FROM SENATOR THOMPSON AND HIS SUPERPOWERED PROTÉGÉ, DANIEL DUNBAR...

WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM.

PROBLEM?

THIS AFTERNOON'S COMEDY PLAY... THE DIALOGUE... NEEDS A REWRITE.

...AND GOING OUT TO AMERICA'S MYSTERY MEN, BOTH ACTIVE AND RETIRED.

THIS REQUEST, THAT THEY SHOULD COME FORWARD AND PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THESE "POLITICALLY AMBIGUOUS" TIM--

YEAH, SO? I THOUGHT BILL DANIELS WAS ALREADY ON IT.

BILL...ER...AH... BILL QUIT THIS MORNING.

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* HE *QUIT*?

HE'S *CERTAIN* HE'S ABOUT TO BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE *HUAC*.

HE SAID HE DIDN'T WANT TO DRAG YOU DOWN WITH HIM. HE WAS THINKING OF *YOU*, HOW YOU'D STOOD BEHIND HIM... BEHIND ALL YOUR WRITERS.

HE WAS TRYING TO PAY YOU BACK... DO THE NOBLE TH--

GET HIM BACK. GET SOME GUYS AND DRAG HIM FROM HIS HOUSE IF YOU HAVE TO.

IF I WANT A *MARTYR*, I'LL CONTACT JOAN OF ARC. YOU TELL HIM WHAT I NEED ARE *WRITERS*... GOOD ONES.

YOU TELL HIM I'LL SELL UP AND GO UNDER BEFORE I GIVE IN TO OLD MEN AND NARROW MINDS.

TELL HIM--

SCOTT'S HEAD ACHES, HIS HANDS SHAKE... AS COUNTLESS TROUBLING THOUGHTS SCRATCH AND SCREAM WITHIN HIM...

--ANTI-COMMUNIST PARANOIA THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY--TURMOIL IN CHINA--CHAOS IN EASTERN EUROPE--THE SOVIETS HAVE THE ATOM BOMB--

--THOMPSON URGING FOR A SUPERPOWERED STRIKE ON EASTERN EUROPE--SIDES--SIDES BEING DRAWN UP--WITHIN AMERICA--WITHIN THE WORLD.

I'M FORCED TO TAKE A STAND--DO WHAT I KNOW IS RIGHT--

--AND WHAT HAPPENS--I LOSE SPONSORS--"BAD PUBLICITY"--THIS HAPPENING AT THE WORST TIME--THE ADVENT OF TELEVISION--

--SIMPLE--

IT USED TO BE SO SIMPLE.

HELLO, THIS IS LIBBY LAWRENCE, WELCOMING ANY VIEWERS WHO MAY HAVE JOINED US LATE.

I HAVE WITH ME HENRY BROWN, A CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYST, AND WE'RE DISCUSSING WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A VERBAL ASSAULT MADE BY SENATOR THOMPSON ON AMERICA'S SUPER-HEROES.

THOMPSON NOW CLAIMS THAT THE SUPER-HEROES' SEEMING RELUCTANCE TO FIGHT OVERSEAS DURING THE WAR WAS SOMEHOW A SIGN OF WEAK CONVICTION AND DUBIOUS PATRIOTISM.

NEW HIDDEN CONSOLE BIG SCREEN

MR. BROWN, COULD THOMPSON'S CLAIMS BE A REACTION TO THE APPARENT APATHY ON THE PART OF AMERICA'S MYSTERYMEN WITH REGARDS TO THE SENATOR'S CALL FOR A VOLUNTARY ALLEGIANCE PLEDGE?

THAT'S INDEED A POSSIBILITY, LIBBY. AND CERTAINLY THOMPSON'S CLAIMS MIGHT HAVE BEEN GIVEN MORE CREDENCE IF NOT FOR JAMES FORRESTAL, EX-U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY.

DUE TO HIS WARTIME POSITION, HE KNEW OF ROOSEVELT'S TENET PRECLUDING SUPER-HEROES FROM BECOMING PART OF THE FIGHTING OVERSEAS.

FORRESTAL'S BEEN VERY VOCAL IN REFUTING THOMPSON'S CLAIMS, MAKING THE MYSTERYMAN WAR-HERO LOOK... WELL, A LITTLE FOOLISH.

FORRESTAL'S ARDOR IN SPEAKING OUT... SOME FORM OF LOYALTY FOR THE MASKED VIGILANTES WHO GUARDED THE HOMEFRONT?

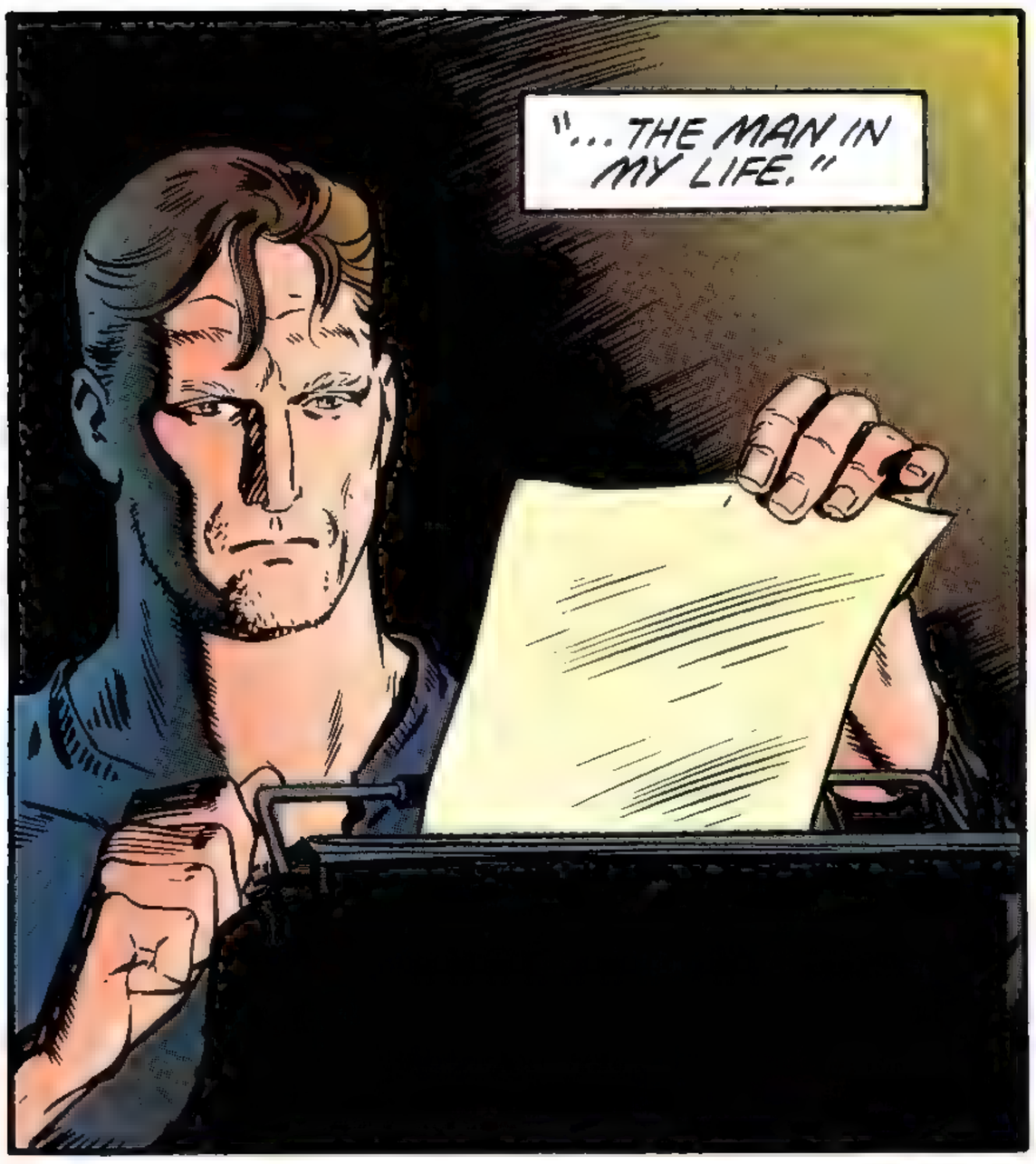
WELL, LIBBY... I THINK IT'S MORE TO DO WITH FORRESTAL'S OWN POLITICAL AMBITIONS BEING AT ODDS WITH THOSE OF--

A NEWSWOMAN AGAIN, LIBBY'S THOUGHTS SHOULD BE ON WORLD EVENTS.

THEY AREN'T.

"HOW COULD I HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS FOR ME? TO MARRY, SETTLE... THEN LIVE VICARIOUSLY THROUGH THE MAN IN MY LIFE."

"ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING..."



door. Such was her haste, that the lipstick she'd bought yesterday afternoon was left to roll off the top of her dresser, falling to the floor and breaking its fine new redness on the filth of the carpet. This, Lulabelle hadn't noticed. Nor would she have cared if she had.

The door to her trailer was thrown open by her, with a force that only passion and longing can bring. That, and the hope that this figure, this hulking male form, was Hank's. The heat of the morn was as dry and burning as all the mornings that week. She noticed that fact no more than her broken lipstick

JUST FOR AN *HOUR*. THAT'S *ALL* I'M ASKING.

WE BECOME CAPTAIN TRIUMPH, FIGHT SOME CRIME... *THEN* MAYBE HIRE A HOOKER OR--

YOU ARE DEAD, MICHAEL. DEATH IS FINAL. *THAT* IS FINAL.

CRIME FIGHTING? HOOKERS? ARE YOU MAD?

DON'T GET PIOUS ON ME, LANCE. *DON'T* YOU GET *PIOUS*. YOU REFRAIN FROM A GOOD *HONEST* HOOKER, YET YOU CHASE THAT *TRAMP*, PAULA BLAKE.

DON'T YOU EVEN SPEAK HER *NAME*, YOU *FILTHY* SPOOK.

SOMETIMES I WISH YOU *WERE* ALIVE, SO I COULD *KILL* YOU!

DINNER WAS LOVELY.

I'M GLAD YOU THOUGHT SO. GOD KNOWS I'VE BEEN PLANNING IT FOR LONG ENOUGH.

YES, YOU *HAVE* BEEN *VERY* PATIENT WITH ME... YOU MUST HAVE THOUGHT I WAS *AVOIDING* YOU.

IT CROSSED MY MIND.

IN THAT CASE, I'LL HAVE TO *CHANGE* YOUR MIND...

...NOW THAT WE'RE ALONE.

TEX THOMPSON IS NOT A GENTLE LOVER.

LYING AMIDST THE SILK SHEETS AND MUSKY ODORS, SUCH THOUGHTS DENY JOAN DAVIS' SLUMBER... "HIS EYES ARE COLD... BODY-MOVEMENTS ROUGH... ALMOST VIOLENT. THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN IT SEEMS..."

"... AS IF HE HATES ME."

"NO, HE LOVES ME... HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT."

"AND I LOVE HIM, DON'T I? IT'S NOT JUST HIS POWER... IT'S NOT. I WANT TO BE MRS. AMERICA FOR THE RIGHT REASONS."

"ALWAYS WRITING... MAKING ENTRIES IN HIS DIARY."

"MAYBE THE DIARY HOLDS ANSWERS... EXPLAINS HIS MOODS AND MACHINATIONS. NOT TO MENTION DUNBAR'S VICES... ROBOTMAN'S INHUMANITY."

28 Aug
Yesterday the
is now Linda
soon

"TO FULLY LOVE TEX, I HAVE TO FULLY UNDERSTAND HIM, DON'T I? IF I LOOKED IN THE DIARY, MAYBE I--"

"NO, PRYING WOULD BE WRONG... DISTRUSTING..."

"... UNAMERICAN."

GREAT FATHER! DARK LORD!

YOU WHO ARE MY INSPIRATION.

HEHEHEHEHEH... BUT OHHH, YOU ARE A RASCAL.

I THOUGHT IT WAS OVER FOR ME... MY LIFE AND PLANS. AND *YOU* LET ME *THINK* IT.

I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND... *WHY* YOU'D FORSAKEN ME... WHY IT WAS *OVER*.

HOW COULD I HAVE KNOWN...

...IT WAS ONLY JUST *BEGINNING*.

BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL

MYSTERY DEATH!

James Forrestal's illness was not considered serious.

In fact, doctors predicted he'd be back to full health in time for the regional elections that Forrestal was considered the prime candidate to win.

Forrestal's nurse, the last person to see him alive, reported his mood to be bright, polished, even slightly flirtatious.

The reason for James Forrestal's suicide remains a mystery.

For 58 minutes the Miracle Pill's powers have lasted.

Tests of strength and sense enhancement.

All tests passed.

All but one.

Fear hits me... like that other time... for the barest of instants.

That last time had been enough to cause night-marish, perception-distorting hallucinations.

This time...

I covered my eyes... dreading the failure as much as the visions I might see.

What I saw...

...was a rooftop.

...WHA...

AAAAAAAAAHHHH

I AM...SO SORRY. REALLY. BUT... BUT DON'T WORRY, YOU WILL BE FULLY COMPENSATED.

ERR... DON'T GET UP, I... I'LL LET MYSELF OUT.

60 minutes makes one hour.

...and I am whole again.

I'M SERIOUS, LIBBY. IT'S TIME YOU QUIT THAT JOB OF YOURS. TIME TO GET MARRIED... HAVE KIDS.

ANYWAY, I DON'T LIKE YOU WORKING. IT'S NOT RIGHT.

BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE *HAPPY* FOR ME... MY NEW LIFE.

AND WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE OLD ONE... WITH ME? ALL OF A SUDDEN IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH?

LISTEN TO ME, GIRL. YOU'RE GETTING OLD... YOU'LL BE THIRTY SOON. *WHAT* SUCCESS COULD *POSSIBLY* LIE AHEAD FOR YOU?

OLD?... I'M *OLD?!*

WELL AT LEAST I'M NOT A *ONE-BOOK, ONE-HIT* WONDER. *CAN'T* WRITE ANYMORE... *CAN'T* DO MUCH OF *ANYTHING.*

YOU BITCH! YOU... WON'T LOOK SO SWEET ON TELEVISION WHEN *I'M* THROUGH WITH YOU.

BASTARD!

YOU ROTTEN BASTARD!

OH, JON.

AND AS IF TO FIGHT HER SADNESS... A THOUGHT IS BORN.

A MEMORY...

... OF HAPPIER TIMES.

JOHNNY.

GARDENING IN THE SUMMER, LEAF-RAKING IN THE AUTUMN, CLEARING SNOW IN THE WINTER. YOU REALLY ARE A HANDY-MAN FOR ALL SEASONS, MR. DALEY.

JACK OF ALL TRADES, MRS. POLK. JACK OF ALL TRADES.

A YEAR SPENT IN COLBY... A SMALL MID-WESTERN TOWN, FILLED WITH WARM HUMANITY.

I'LL MISS THIS PLACE.

SO HOW'S YOURSELF, BOB? ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS?

FATHER MARK WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D HELP WITH THE SCENERY PAINTING FOR THIS YEAR'S NATIVITY PLAY.

I'M AFRAID NOT. PAUL AND I WILL BE AWAY VISITING FRIENDS.

39¢ LB

57¢

DID I HEAR YOU RIGHT, BOB... YOU'RE LEAVING COLBY? YOU'LL BE COMING BACK, I HOPE.

I HOPE SO, YES. I LIKE THIS TOWN. I LIKE HOW YOU MADE US WELCOME.

WELL, THE TOWN SEEMS TO AGREE WITH YOU BOTH. YOU LOST SOME OF THE WEIGHT YOU ARRIVED WITH...

AND PAUL... HIS ATTITUDE.

HE'S CHANGED TOO.

run.

run

never stop.

lungs ache... lungs burn... but never stop.

run.

save the eagle.

don't let them have it... don't let them kill it.

the fear's no less... it hasn't changed.

it still oozes from your pores, tastes bitter-sharp on your tongue.

what has changed...

...is that you're fighting it.

save the eagle.

save it.

save--

n...no...

nnoooOOOhhhh!!

UUUHH!

Still afraid.

part of you wants to crawl off to the darkest, safest part of colby...hide away forever.

IT'S TIME.

part of you... that you're not... that you can't listen to.

...to learn your past... to learn the truth and face it head on.

that's what heroes do.

DON'T THEY?

ONE THING I *DO* REMEMBER...IS HOW MUCH I *HATE* NEW YORK.

I HOPE HE'S EXPECTING US.

DON'T WORRY, I CALLED AND EXPLAINED IT ALL.

HE REMEMBERS YOU, TOO. NOT WELL, THOUGH. YOU WERE NEVER CLOSE, AFTER ALL.

HOPE THE YEAR IN COLBY, THIS YEAR OF WAITING, WAS WORTH IT. WAITING FOR *HIM* TO RETURN TO AMERICA.

HIS STUDIES IN HYPNOTISM... USING IT TO LEARN ABOUT HIS *OWN* PAST LIVES...IT'S JUST THE THING FOR YOU. HELP YOU TO PULL BACK THE CURTAIN OF YOUR *MEMORY*... LET THE LIGHT IN.

I HOPE.

GEEZ, PAUL... I SAID TRUST ME, BACK WHEN WE MET, DIDN'T I? SO TRUST M--

OH BOY.

GREETINGS, GENTLEMEN. GREETINGS!

I HOPE MY DWELLING AND APPEARANCE AREN'T *TOO* ALARMING.

DISCOVERING ONE'S ROOTS CAN BE UNSETTLING... FOR THOSE OTHER THAN THE ONE DOING THE DISCOVERING.

IF YOU DON'T RECALL ME, PAUL, THEN I SUPPOSE *RE*INTRO-DUCTIONS ARE IN ORDER.

I AM CARTER HALL.

YOU'RE SURE THIS WILL WORK?

YOU... WERE *HAWKMAN*?

YES... ONCE. A LIFETIME AGO.

OH YES. MEMORY IS MERELY A DOOR... WHICH SOMETIMES BECOMES LOCKED.

IN WHICH CASE *HYPNOTISM* IS THE KEY.

NOW *WATCH* THE AMULET... WATCH IT *SWING*...

"...AND REMEMBER!"

paul kirk...until now i knew--remembered--that was my name. but little else. didn't know who he... who I was... who I really was.

Now I do.

Paul kirk, the playboy. Paul kirk, the adventurer, the big game hunter. God, what a carefree life I had.

Especially when I was with Tex Thompson.

This was before Bob Daley's time... when Tex and I would paint the town, and stain the African plains, red. We were inseparable, me and Tex.

Did everything together. Him, a few years older, like a guiding hand... an elder brother.

One day he revealed to me he'd become a mysteryman, Mr. America. Maybe it was subconscious... his guiding hand still working...

commitments arose, as the years went by. We drifted apart some, but stayed in touch.

But within a year I'd followed suit.

A couple of times we went out... did the crimefighting thing together.

MYSTERY MEN ON THE RISE

RAPID INCRE IN BIZARRE CI

Those were the best... the golden Times

Then one day... Tex disappeared.

I hadn't been seeing much of him before then, anyway, yet... I don't know... something was missing after that. The friendly competition between us... the fact that he was out there on the streets somewhere, like me.

After that, fighting criminals began to feel petty, small... compared to the war.

So... one parachute and a few bribes later, I was in Europe.

Kept the Manhunter tag... became my code-name. The rest of it-- the mask and the costume --stayed stateside. This was war, after all, not fancy dress.

MYSTERY MEN GO TO WAR?

Working with the resistance, I upset the Nazis plenty.

Then one day I followed some S.S. officers down a sidestreet. Plan was to kill them

I found I'd been beaten to it... by one of their own.

It was Tex

Knowing Tex was out there on the European streets...from then on, I'm ashamed to admit, the war became a bit of a game. Like those early days as a crime-fighter.

Sometimes Tex and I worked as a team. Our most famous stunt was credited solely to him, but we worked together...

...killing all of the enemy's superhumans.

Sure, it was Tex who forged the orders, summoning them all to that chateau. But it was me who went in and wired the place... blew it to Valhalla.

I killed Parsifal, too. Hitler's secret weapon ...his "knight" and defender...who'd kept the allied super-heroes at bay.

He was a little runt of a man with bad breath and a worse complexion.

Somehow, the credit for that went to Tex as well, but in the last couple of weeks of war, I was too busy killing generals and destroying defenses to keep count or to care.

Hitler was holed up somewhere, awaiting the end... American troops were just outside Berlin. I figured it would all be over soon, and who did what and got what glory could get sorted out then.

A...and then...

"YES, PAUL?"

And then it happened.

"WHAT? TRY TO REMEMBER. TRY -- YOU MUST!"

I'm scared... scared to... I'm... it was...when...

"WHEN WHAT? WHAT HAPPENED?"

My...world exploded.

I was on the verge of shipping back to America... or pushing on to the Pacific. One or the other.

Then word came to me that one of Hitler's scientists was still at large... and still at work.

I'm not talking rocket scientist. I'm talking the other kind... the kind that used death camp prisoners and P.O.W.s as guinea pigs. I'm talking mad, cruel, foul research.

I'm talking about someone who deserved to die!

Located him... in a Bavarian castle hidden away.

Breached its defenses. My gun was loaded, my knife and my wits were sharp. I was ready...

...for anything except what I saw.

One of those lying on the tables was familiar to me.

Vaguely. A memory of her...her beauty... famous beauty.

Then I recalled... she was Delores Winters, a movie actress from the '30s.

She vanished in '38.

My blood turned to ice when I remembered why.

And when I saw that Tex was lying next to her.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, LANCE.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, HONEY. IT'S SO NICE TO GET YOU ALONE, AT LAST.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WE'VE BEEN ALONE BEFORE.

NO, I MEAN REALLY ALONE... I MEAN...

OH, FORGET IT.

COME HERE.

MICHAEL HAD GONE, AS HE SOMETIMES DID. TO FLY AROUND THE CITY, TASTING LIFE VICARIOUSLY... A SPYING, PRYING, VOYEUR SPIRIT.

LANCE HOPED HE'D BE GONE FOR THE NIGHT. HE'D HOPED FOR A NIGHT OF PEACE AND ROMANCE.

HE HOPED IN VAIN.

KNCK KNCK

DAMNATION. OF ALL THE TIMES...

I'M SORRY... I HAD TO COME. NOWHERE ELSE.

JOAN?

I... CAN'T STAY LONG.

PAULA, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I COULD THINK OF...

YES, OF COURSE. COME TO THE FIRE, YOU'RE SOAKED. LANCE, MAKE SOME COFFEE, WOULD YOU?

IT'S MY LIFE WITH TEX. IT'S GETTING STRANGE.

HE'S GOTTEN STRANGE.

HE TALKS IN HIS SLEEP... MUMBLES STUFF I CAN'T UNDERSTAND. BUT I KNOW HE'S TROUBLED, SO I'M TROUBLED.

HIS DIARY... I THOUGHT IT MIGHT HOLD SOME ANSWERS.

HE FORGOT TO LOCK THE DRAWER HE KEEPS IT IN. BUT THE BOOK *ITSELF* IS STILL LOCKED.

PLEASE, DON'T BE OFFENDED, BUT AS YOU'VE HAD EXPERI-ENCE WITH THAT SORT OF THING, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT--

NOW HOLD ON, PAULA. THAT'S INVASION OF PRIVACY.

OH, POOH.

HAND ME A BOBBY PIN.

HEY, THAT'S DELORES WINTERS. SHE WAS--

I *KNOW* WHO SHE WAS. I REMEMBER.

JESUS.

My plans had always been brilliant. And it was flattering that so many super-heroes regarded me, the Ultra-Humanite, as their archfoe.

Yet there lay the problem. I was always falling afoul of some accursed do-gooder... all colored tights and noble heart.

I could see that wasn't going to change... that if I wanted to prosper, I should go someplace the super-heroes weren't

It didn't take a genius to figure out where.

Hitler welcomed me. Dachau became my playground.

And oh the fun I had.

But by '45 it was obvious the game was over. Hitler was praying for a miracle.

Then I was alerted to suspicions surrounding a certain S.S. officer. It was believed he could be a spy.

I took one look, recognized him... and confirmed that he was.

Tex Thompson was going to be more than that, however... he was going to be my escape.

I'd escaped death once. In '42, when I transferred my brain out of my tired old body, and into the lovely young form of Delores.

Brain transference is like riding a bicycle... once you learn how, you never forget.

Of course, keeping this bike-ride a secret meant silencing a few people along the way...

I...I'VE BEEN SLEEPING WITH THE ULTRA-HUMANITE.

MOTHER OF GOD!

IT GETS WORSE.

WORSE?... TEX THOMPSON IS THE ULTRA-HUMANITE... HOW MUCH WORSE CAN IT *GET*?

THIS IS BIG... WAY TOO BIG FOR US

SHIT AND HELLFIRE!

WE'LL NEED HELP... *SOMEONE* WHO'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO.

so shocked... i was...

the ultra-humanite's brain had been in delores winters's body, and now his brain was in tex.

my friend was dead.

the ultra-humanite must have been the scientist... my prey.

but with me hanging there... my rifle...hard to aim.

wanted to kill him before. had to kill him now.

when i did...i dunno... maybe it caught the moonlight... caused a glimmer. whatever...

...i caught that monster's attention.

i looked down.

he looked up.

things looked bad.

after what he'd done to tex, god knows what he'd do to me.

i wasn't going to give him the satisfaction.

i hit my head. ha!... among other places.

the blow must have garbled my head... my thought processes. "don't trust thompson" became a message from my subconscious not to trust anyone.

THE FIR TREE BROKE MY FALL. I LIMPED AWAY FROM THE SCENE, BEFORE THE GERMAN SOLDIERS COULD FIND ME.

AND INTO YEARS OF FEAR AND DISSOLUTION.

WHEN HE COULDN'T FIND YOUR BODY... WITH YOU KNOWING HIS SECRET... THAT MEANT THE ULTRA-HUMANITE *HAD* TO KEEP *LOOKING* FOR YOU.

THOSE MEN THAT ATTACKED US LAST YEAR... THEY WORKED FOR HIM... THEY *MUST* HAVE.

YES, WELL, THAT WAS *THEN*, BOYS.

WHAT DO WE DO *NOW*?

WELL, IT DOES SOUND A BIT FAR-FETCHED, PAULA. WHAT IF THE DIARY'S FORGED... A POLITICAL TRAP, MAYBE?

AND IF IT /S TRUE... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOU--

OH... WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? WHY AM I SUDDENLY SELECTED AS THE--

WE HAVE TO TELL EVERYONE, DON'T WE? MAKE THEM BELIEVE.

YOU KNOW EVERYONE. YOU'RE THE MAN.

HOURMAN, FOR INSTANCE. I DON'T KNOW HIS REAL IDENTITY, LET ALONE HIS PHONE NUMB--

PAULA... HOLD ON, I'VE GOT ANOTHER CALL. YES, OF COURSE I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

RING

HELLO, THIS IS JOHNNY CHAMBERS.

OPER

8 TUV

WXY

JOHNNY, THIS IS CARTER HALL... YES, I GOT BACK A FEW DAYS AGO.

LISTEN, DO YOU REMEMBER PAUL KIRK?...

RING RING

RING RING

SUMMONS

You are hereby summoned to appear before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee at 10:30 AM on the morning of January 8th, 1950. Failure to respond to this summons will result in

I COULD MAKE THEM GO AWAY.

RING RING

MAKE THEM ALL GO AWAY.

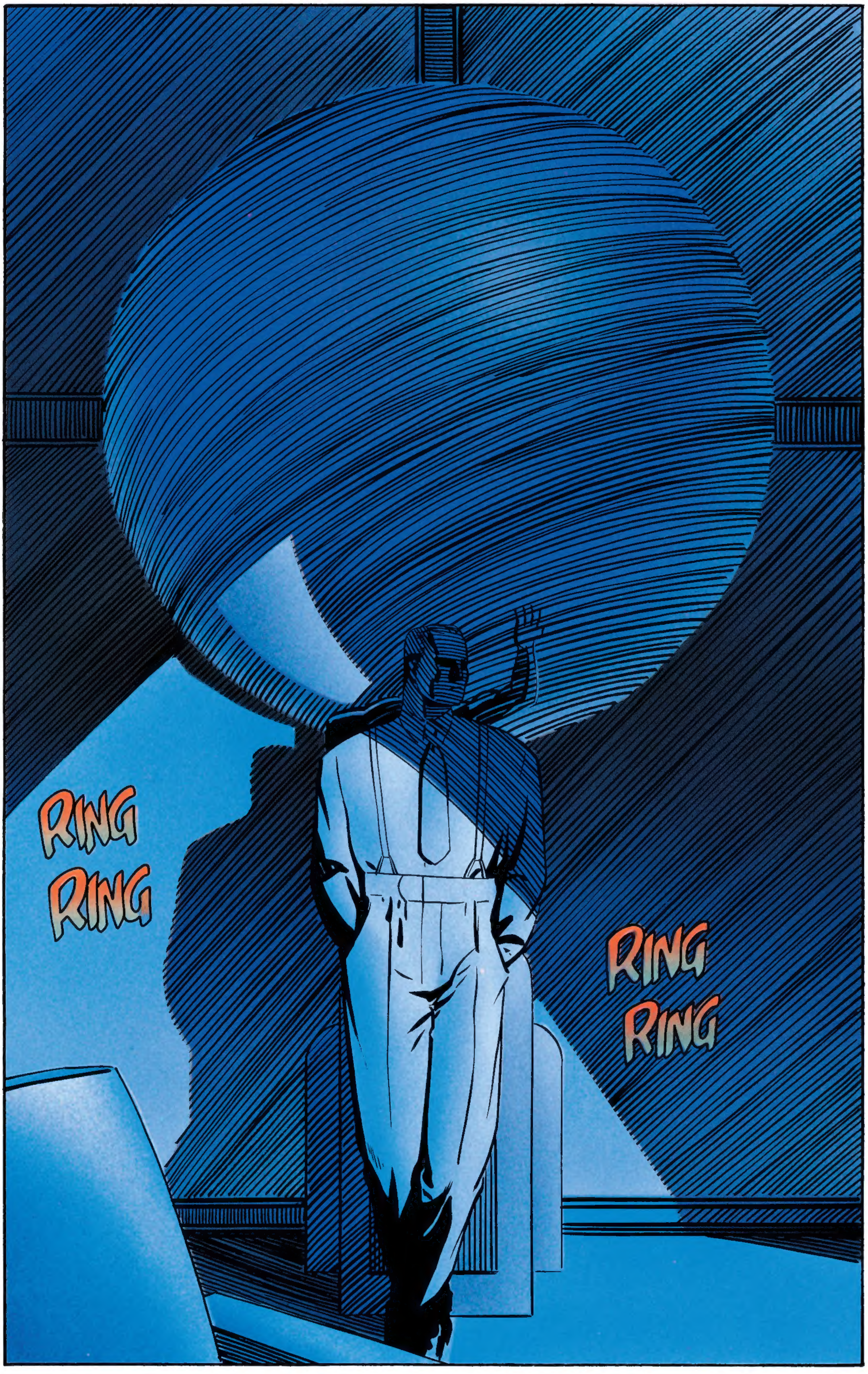
RING RING

NO...WHAT AM I THINKING? THAT'S NOT THE ANSWER.

...I ONLY WISH I KNEW WHAT WAS.

RING RING

RING RING


RING
RING
RING
RING